

I claim:

1. A latch assembly for a ramp of a trailer, the ramp moveable between a storage position wherein the ramp is stored below the trailer and an extended position wherein  
5 the ramp extends from the trailer, comprising:

a mounting tube extending along a longitudinal axis and mountable to an underside of the trailer;

a clamp tube; and

a link arm for pivotably connecting the clamp tube to the mounting tube, the  
10 clamp tube vertically movable between an interfering position wherein the clamp tube is vertically spaced from the mounting tube and a non-interfering position wherein the clamp tube is adjacent the mounting tube.

2. The latch assembly of claim 1 wherein the link arm includes an interfering  
15 portion, the link arm movable between a latching position wherein the interfering portion of the link arm extends through a plane in which the ramp is stored below the trailer with the clamp tube in the interfering position and a non-latching position.

3. The latch assembly of claim 2 further comprising a locking device connectable  
20 to the link arm for maintaining the link arm in the latching position.

4. The latch assembly of claim 2 wherein the interfering portion of the link arm includes a beveled leading edge.

25 5. The latch assembly of claim 1 further comprising a handle interconnected to a terminal end of the link arm to facilitate movement of the clamp tube between the interfering and non-interfering positions.

6. The latch assembly of claim 1 further comprising a connection arm pivotably  
30 connecting the clamp tube to the mounting tube, the connection arm being axial spaced from the link arm.

7. A latch assembly for a ramp of a trailer, the ramp moveable between a storage position wherein the ramp is stored below the trailer and an extended position wherein the ramp extends from a trailing edge of the trailer, comprising:

a moveable handle extending along an axis and having leading and trailing ends;

5 a leading link arm for pivotably connecting the leading end of the movable handle to the trailer; and

a trailing link arm for pivotably connecting the trailing end of the movable handle to the trailer, the trailing link arm having an interfering portion extending from the movable handle;

10 wherein the moveable handle is moveable between an interfering position wherein the interfering portion of the trailing link arm intersects a plane in which the ramp is stored below the trailer and a non-interfering position.

8. The latch assembly of claim 7 further comprising a mounting element rigidly  
15 connected to the trailer and having leading and trailing ends, the leading link arm being pivotably connected to the leading end of the mounting element and the trailing link arm pivotably connected to the mounting element.

9. The latch assembly of claim 7 further comprising a locking device connectable  
20 to the trailing link arm for maintaining the moveable handle in the interfering position.

10. The latch assembly of claim 7 wherein the interfering portion of the trailing link arm includes a beveled leading edge extending through the plane.

25 11. The latch assembly of claim 7 further comprising a grasping member projecting laterally from a terminal end of the trailing link arm to facilitate movement of the movable handle between the interfering and non-interfering positions.

12. The latch assembly of claim 7 wherein the movable handle is an elongated  
30 tube having a generally rectangular cross section, the elongated tube having first and second sides and upper and lower faces.

13. The latch assembly of claim 7 wherein the leading and trailing link arms are pivotably connect to the first side of the elongated tube and wherein the latch assembly further comprises:

5           a second leading link arm for pivotably connecting the second side of the leading end of the elongated tube to the trailer; and

          a second trailing link arm for pivotably connecting the second side of the trailing end of the elongated tube to the trailer, the second trailing link arm having an interfering portion extending from the elongated tube;

10           wherein the interfering portion of the second trailing link arm intersects a plane in which the ramp is stored below the trailer with the moveable handle in the interfering position.

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14. A latch assembly for a ramp of a trailer, the ramp moveable between a storage position wherein the ramp lies in a plane below the trailer and an extended position wherein the ramp extends from the trailer, comprising:

5 a mounting tube extending along a longitudinal axis and having first and second sides; leading and trailing ends; and upper and lower faces, the upper face being connectable to an underside of the trailer;

a clamp tube extending along a longitudinal axis and having first and second sides and leading and trailing ends;

10 a first leading link arm adjacent the leading end of the clamp tube for pivotably connecting the first side of the clamp tube to the first side of the mounting tube;

a second leading link arm adjacent the leading end of the clamp tube for pivotably connecting the second side of the clamp tube to the second side of the mounting tube;

15 a first trailing link arm adjacent the trailing end of the clamp tube for pivotably connecting the first side of the clamp tube to the first side of the mounting tube, the first trailing link arm having an interfering portion extending from the clamp tube; and

a second trailing link arm adjacent the trailing end of the clamp tube for pivotably connecting the second side of the clamp tube to the second side of the mounting tube, the second trailing link arm having an interfering portion extending from the clamp tube;

20 wherein the clamp tube is vertically movable between an interfering position wherein the clamp tube is vertically spaced from the mounting tube and the interfering portions of the first and second trailing link arms intersect the plane and a non-interfering position wherein the clamp tube is adjacent the mounting tube.

25 15. The latch assembly of claim 14 further comprising a grasping member, the grasping member including:

a first grasping portion extending laterally from the first trailing link arm;

a second grasping portion extending laterally from the second trailing link arm;

and

30 a central grasping portion extending between the first and second trailing link arms.

16. The latch assembly of claim 14 wherein at least one of the trailing link arms includes an aperture therethrough and wherein the latch assembly further comprises a locking member having bolt receivable in the aperture of the at least one of the trailing link arms for maintaining the clamp tube in the interfering position.

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17. The latch assembly of claim 14 wherein the interfering portions of the first and second trailing link arms include beveled leading edges that extend through the plane.